

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

## A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 283.—THIRD SERIES.

SATURDAY, JUNE 2, 1894.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

### MARRIED TO ORDER.

A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.

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#### CHAPTER XXXIII. IN SIGHT OF DANGER.

It is very easy to drift down a stream. What is difficult is to seize an overhanging branch and to resist the current.

Forster and Penelope saw no reason to pause in that pleasant drifting; Forster, because he silenced his conscience with the idea that he was making up for Philip's neglect, and Penelope, because she was carried away by the strength of this new joy. The luxury about her had weakened some of the old strength of purpose. Ease has many hidden snares, and those who have not been used to it from childhood fall more easily into these hidden pitfalls.

Outwardly all seemed very natural, very pleasant. Forster daily became stronger, and some of the old buoyancy apparently was returning to him. Dora became happier about him, and wrote letters to her mother full of delight about the place and of admiration for the Princess, who was, she said, so kind and considerate, that she was fast curing Forster of his weakness. She told Adela about the walks they took, and how Forster was getting so strong that they were proposing to ascend the great mountain, and were now only waiting for a suitable day.

Dora was young enough to be blinded by the outwardly easy intercourse, with which no stranger or onlooker could have found fault. She did not know that Penelope's gentleness and softness were quite new to her. She could not guess when the four sat round the fire after

dinner if the weather were chilly, or strolled slowly up the glen path on a warm moonlight evening, that her brother was living a life entirely new to him, and entirely foreign to his old ideas. They naturally separated into two couples; the Duke was amused with Dora's simple light-heartedness and bright young enthusiasm, whilst Penelope and Forster, in low, soft tones, discussed many things in heaven and earth. Forster was the one whose voice was more usually heard, and Penelope listened, drinking in his ways and his ideas.

To some the life might have seemed monotonous, but that suggestion did not enter into the minds of Forster and Dora. At times Forster and Penelope were left alone for a little while, and then a strange shyness descended upon them, and a dangerous silence enveloped them. But what could they say which all the world might not hear? Penelope would not think of the future. She wanted to live only in the present, she did not wish to look forward. Now was the moment when life could be enjoyed, now, and she grasped the moment, fearing only her inability to enjoy it enough.

Philip's name was no longer mentioned between them; it was only the Duke who occasionally alluded to the absent master of the Palace—a master whom no one recognised, and whom no one wished to see. Dora, too, sometimes wondered what Philip was doing out there in the African colony; she even reminded Forster that only when he went back could Philip come home; but Forster merely replied that that was not a fact, for Philip was not really bound to remain.

"Mr. Winskell is so good I'm sure he won't leave the sheep in the wilderness," said Dora, laughing. The brother and

sister were alone when she spoke thus. A reserve which Dora could not explain to herself made her chary of mentioning the absent husband to Penelope.

"I do not understand Philip," replied Forster, then he changed the conversation.

It was the day after this remark was made that, when the party met at breakfast, Penelope exclaimed:

"We have not waited in vain. To-day is quite perfect for our ascent. I will send a boy early to take up our provisions, and if you feel equal to it, Mr. Bethune, I think it will not be too hot."

"I am sure I shall enjoy it," said Forster, looking at the Duke. "You will come too?"

"I am afraid I can't come to-day, Penelope. Oldcorn has made me promise to go with him to the old plantation. There are trees to be marked. He is so seldom at liberty that I must go."

"That is disappointing," said Dora.

"But you must go all the same. Tomorrow we might row to the end of the lake, and the little steamer or the carriage might take us back."

For one moment Penelope wondered if they should wait for her uncle, then she decided that scruples were foolish. Dora would be with them, and Mrs. Grundy seldom had time to visit this glen. A few tourists would perhaps be found on the summit, but tourists were, in Penelope's eyes, hardly human beings. So the preparations were made, and Forster felt almost a boy again as he helped the Princess to pack some baskets. The lad was despatched with the mountain pony, and an hour later the three started up the glen. Dora flitted hither and thither, collecting flowers, hunting for rare ferns. Conversation was almost impossible till the noisy Rothery was left behind, but the voices of nature spoke for them, using a thousand new terms of love.

Then they reached the gate, and paused. Dora had started off with Nero to pick some wild roses growing a little off the path. Forster leant on the gate to rest, for they had promised themselves to take everything very easily.

"It certainly is a perfect day, Princess," said Forster, and then he smiled to himself at the remembrance of his former objection to this name. Now it seemed the only title fit for this perfect woman.

Penzie noted his words, and her heart beat faster. How grand and noble he was, how handsome he looked now that he was so much stronger! How well they two could have understood all that was best in life!

"Yes," she said softly, as if thinking of something else; "it is a beautiful day. If only one could be sure of other beautiful days. It is the certainty that the fine days must pass away which is so saddening."

"But the remembrance of beauty can never be taken away. You have been very kind, Princess, to let me stay here, and to—to—do me so much good."

"It's not good of me at all," she answered, blushing in spite of herself.

"Do you know," he continued, "that the thought of your loneliness oppressed me strongly in my illness. I blamed myself for having brought it about, and then——"

"You should not have done so."

"Then I noticed how little the one who should have cared for you dwelt upon it. Do you know that you caused the first real quarrel between me and Philip?" This was the first time Forster had alluded to this subject.

"Oh! did you quarrel?" she asked hurriedly.

"Yes; I could not understand him. Knowing you, I was sure——"

"But you don't know me," answered Penzie hurriedly, greatly longing to tell him the truth.

At this moment Nero came bounding back, and Dora soon followed him.

"I'm sure I've found it."

"Found what?" said Forster absently.

"The moonwort. It is very small, and the cows have kindly spared it. I told Mr. De Lucy I should find it, and he did not believe me. Oh, Penelope, you don't know how that man contradicts me! He really is the most disagreeable person I have ever met."

"I thought that he was a very superior individual."

"Yes, superior, but oh! I hate superior men."

"They spend much time in sparring, certainly," said Forster, walking on, and wishing that Dora had been at this moment anywhere, anywhere out of the Vale of the Rothery.

Then they began to climb the bare mountain side. The little path, seen far ahead, rose higher and higher, clinging, as it were, to the hillside. Soft summer clouds floated lazily above them; and invisible larks added their song to the chorus of joy. Now and then the sheep, followed by several large lambs, rushed off frightened at nothing, and the lazy cows, heedless of them, chewed the short grass.

As they rose higher among loose, grey boulders, partly covered with ferns or low grass, they could only walk in single file. They kept the grey wall ever in sight, but it seemed an endless pilgrimage to reach it.

Penelope remembered the day she had walked up there alone, and how Philip had come to her rescue. She tried to put away that remembrance, only conscious how much happier she was now than she had been that day.

At times Forster walked beside her, ready to give her a helping hand; now and then she actually accepted it, though help was really quite unnecessary to this mountain maid.

At last they reached the gate and looked down into the great basin-like hollow, where the high tarn slept peacefully, and where above it rose the real summit. On either side of the tarn was the buttress-like neck of land, by climbing up which the summit might be gained, but first they had to go down to the tarn, walking through long grass and marsh and sluggish rivulets.

"You must take care of your footing," said Forster. "You might stumble here."

Then suddenly Dora called out:

"Look at this dearest little nest. It is all woven in with the dry grass, but the birds have long ago forsaken it."

The nest was a very slight fabric, and yet it was strong enough to resist the fearful storms that so often sweep over the mountain tarns. It had once been a home, and love had built it. Penelope stooped down and examined it, replacing it gently where Dora had found it.

Then they proceeded, after stopping to gaze at the deep blue waters of the tarn. Now there was no fear of being stopped by any difficulty. Forster was beside her, and Penelope led the way, smiling happily as, now and then, her companion warned her of danger.

Dora was delighted at the stiff climb which awaited them, nor was she easily persuaded to be careful, though the danger of a false step was not to be lightly estimated.

However, nothing exciting occurred, and when they reached the spot where on a former occasion Penelope had been stopped, and where Philip had come to rescue her, she did not like the remembrance of it. There he had so tenderly helped her, and there his honest face had had a ray of hope in it. She hurried away from Forster's side for a minute, and without

his knowing the reason, he felt the change in her. She would not accept his help, and she was silent for the rest of the climb. But when they reached the cairn, and when Dora exclaimed at the beauty of the scene, the feeling passed away. Forster's brightness returned, and all was again joyful.

"If only I could get our poor fellows here and make them admire all this beauty," said Forster, in spite of himself thinking of the colony. "The mind, however, is its own place, and they might not feel elevated even by the sight of these blue ranges."

"Well, I never heard you doubt before, Forster, that your dear fellows had not as sensitive feelings as our own," exclaimed Dora. "I am afraid doubt has entered your strong castle."

"I am afraid it has."

"At least, you do not doubt that you are hungry," said Penelope, smiling.

Then the boy was told to unpack the hamper, and the present was once more cloudless.

"Do you know, dear Princess, that you have quite enchanted us," remarked Dora, when the three sat quietly enjoying the peaks and their varying shadows. "Forster has not spoken of returning home, and this morning mother sent me a letter wishing to know when we proposed doing so. Adela adds that the De Lucys think of coming up here for a few days on their way to Scotland. Isn't that odd?"

"Yes," said Forster quickly, "we must be thinking of going away soon."

"Why must you? You are not strong enough yet to go back to—to Africa."

"If not there, at all events I have many friends who will be wanting me. I have forsaken them for a long time."

Forster spoke wearily. The old enthusiasm about his work seemed gone.

"You must wait, at all events, till the De Lucys come. They will go to the 'Lake Hotel,' I suppose. It is very comfortable there, I believe."

"I prefer our solitude," said Forster a little sadly, for however sweet their solitude had been, where was to be the end of it?

To-day for the first time there came to him the feeling that there must be an end, and that there was something very weakening in this earthly paradise. He felt powerless to decide; he only knew that to be near Penelope was at present his heaven.

Outwardly they bandied merry words.

Dora's spirits never flagged—why should they? Her mind reflected all the goodness and the beauty about her, and was incapable at present of perceiving the evil. Besides, Forster's presence meant for her everything that was highest and best on earth.

Then they had reluctantly to make a move. Though they had said nothing of a private nature, Penelope knew that she and Forster understood that words are poor messengers, and that there is something stronger than language.

"We shall often think of this afternoon," he said, including Dora because he was obliged to do so.

"Uncle will regret not having come with us," answered Penelope, angry with herself for saying anything so commonplace, but incapable of finding anything else suitable for Dora's ears.

"Which way shall we go down?" asked Dora.

"If you are not afraid, I can take you down a steep but a much shorter way than we came, only we must cross the old wood on the right-hand side of the valley."

"That will be delightful. We have never been there. Is that where the Duke was going to mark trees?" said Dora.

"Yes; but he will have gone home long before we get there."

Again Penelope led the way, and this time Forster no longer pretended to himself that he was acting the "preux chevalier"; as he noted her every movement, her perfect figure, her face with its pure outline and exquisite colouring, the knowledge of the truth overwhelmed him.

He was in love with her, in love with Philip's neglected wife, and he was sinning in thought if not in deed. He, Forster Bethune, whose life had been stainless, whose reputation as a philanthropist was widespread! What would the world say if it knew this? What would his mother and his sister say? Even his father, retired book-worm that he was, would not his gentlemanly sense of honour be entirely horrified by hearing that his only son had fallen so low? The truth also horrified him, but the fact gave him intense happiness. He loved her; he could not marry her, he could do nothing, but he loved her, and he must not even let her know it. He hated himself for realising the position, but now self-blindness could go no farther.

At last they reached the edge of the mountain. The descent to the head of the valley below was steep, but not impossible.

After this one could save a long bend by taking the opposite path into the wood which Penelope had mentioned.

They did not hurry themselves, so that by the time they had reached the entrance of the wood the sun was sinking fast, and the shadows already looked mysterious striking across the long vista of fir stems.

Then again silence fell on them, and the mystery of life, and of their lives in particular, enveloped the Princess and her lover, whilst to Dora the place only suggested a new hunting-field for strange ferns and flowers.

It so happened that now Forster found himself several times walking alone with Penelope.

At last Dora's voice was again heard as she came running up to them.

"Oh, Forster, I've seen such a clump of beech fern! I must dig it up; but it is getting chilly, you ought not to be out. Do make him get home quickly, dear Princess, and then use your authority over him. Oh, Forster, give me your big pocket-handkerchief to carry home my ferns. I won't be long, I promise you."

The two acquiesced silently. Forster merely remarked as she ran off:

"Don't be long, Dora, and don't lose yourself."

"You have but to follow the path," added Penelope. "If you are not in soon I shall send a search party."

"Never fear! And please don't wait for me."

#### CHAPTER XXXIV. THE KING'S QUEST.

DORA's patch of beech fern was really on the far side of the wood, where a low stone wall protected it from tourists, and separated it from the neighbouring wild country. In one moist corner, covering a steep bank, the delicate fern spread itself in safe luxuriance. Dora had long wished to possess this plant, and in her ardour of possession, she forgot all else. Barely waiting to admire its beautiful growth and its perfect surroundings, she began tearing up the soft boggy soil, then spreading out Forster's handkerchief, she congratulated herself about the box which she would fill, and which she would send home for Adela to plant in her fernery.

She was in the midst of this entrancing occupation when she was extremely astonished by hearing a low laugh close beside her. She started up, and found herself face to face with a strange, wild-looking old man.



His costume was certainly extraordinary, and was something between that of a farmer and a peasant. The fustian of his knee-breeches was dirty and patched, and his coat looked as if it had weathered many storms. But Dora was more attentive to his face than to his clothes. She saw that the old man was lame, and helped himself to crawl about with a stout stick. His deep-set eyes looked very cunning, peering out as they did from beneath shaggy eyebrows. The expression of his still hale-looking face was made up partly of cunning, and partly of malice.

The young girl was naturally courageous, but she felt a slight shudder as she hastily stood up, still holding a clump of fern roots in her hands.

"I've caught you thieving," he said with a low chuckle, but Dora was surprised to hear that though the voice was rough, the accent was that of an educated man. "Who gave you leave, young miss, to take those ferns away?"

"The Princess, of course," answered Dora indignantly.

"Eh, the Princess, was it? but she has no power to give you leave. This land is mine, don't you know that?" he peered down upon it as if he were seeing his own name inscribed upon the damp moss; "the land is mine for all the proud Princess may think; mine, I tell you."

"Yours!" said Dora incredulously, not yet realising the truth. "Yours, I thought all this hillside belonged to the Winskells. Besides, the Princess——"

"That's what she says. She's proud, proud as the old gentleman himself, so was her great-aunt. Ah, you thought this was hers, did you? Listen, young miss, I'll tell you a secret. Ah, ah!"

Dora was now more than a little alarmed at the old man's look. A sudden idea entered her head. "He is mad. What shall I do?" Then she looked at his crippled condition, and scolded herself for her cowardice. She had but to use her nimble feet, and the old man could never come near to her. She wished, however, to vindicate the Princess before she took to flight.

"I remember now that this wood does belong to the Princess. She said that it was hers, as we looked at it from the top of the mountain."

The old man chuckled again as if there were some joke in the words.

"She said that, did she, when she looked down on all this? She called it hers.

Curse her pride. Come here, young miss; you look fit to keep a secret. Eh? listen. This wood isn't hers. It's mine, mine, the King of Rothery. Have not you heard of him? Ah, ah! I keep out of the way now. I don't like those grand doings up there and those new periwig servants; but it's all mine."

"You are the King of Rothery? Are you her father?"

Dora's tone expressed the astonishment she felt.

"You don't believe it? Ah, ah! That is it, you think—I'm put away; but I prefer it. My son knew better than Penelope. He never would have been such a fool as she is. Penelope's a fool, I tell you."

Dora knew that the old King was considered to be somewhat "off his head." She was not, therefore, so much surprised as she otherwise would have been. It was no use arguing with a madman, however, so Dora tried to show proper humility, in spite of the shock she had received by finding out she was in the presence of Penelope's father.

"I am sorry I trespassed. I will go on at once," she said with dignity blended with humility.

But all this seemed wasted on the strange being in front of her.

"No; come along with me. I want you. Penelope won't believe me. Listen; who is that man who walked on with her? I saw him."

"That was my brother."

"That's the man Penelope should have married; but she didn't ask me. She thinks—hush!—she may hear us."

He looked round him and listened.

Dora blushed—though the gathering darkness hid her blushes—at the mention of such a strange thing, then, remembering the man's madness, she again tried to get away from him.

"I must go back to the Palace; they will be waiting for me."

"Ah!" laughed the King, as if Dora had made a joke, "waiting for you! Not a bit of it. Come with me; I want you. I'll show you a shorter way home. I know every stone and every stick in the Rothery Valley. Come, follow me, if you can."

Dora smiled at the last remark, for to follow a cripple, such as the one before her, presented no sort of difficulty. She considered a moment if it were best to follow him or to leave him. He seemed to divine her thoughts, for he turned round and peered at her in a most unpleasant manner.

Dora was beginning to be a little afraid of this strange King, when a new idea struck her.

"I will come to-morrow if that will suit you as well, sir."

"No, no; I want you now. Ah, you don't know," he said, beginning to walk on by the help of the low wall; "it's not often they let me alone. To-day, Jim has gone with that precious fool Greybarrow."

Dora resigned herself and followed. It seemed better to give in to the King's whim, whatever it might be, than to escape; but she could not help feeling a little nervous at being in this lonely wood alone with this mad, cunning old man.

"You like Penelope, don't you?" he asked, after a time of inaudible mutterings, as he painfully made his way along the side of the wood.

"Yes, of course I do," said Dora enthusiastically.

"Then tell her what a fool she has been. She won't believe me. Before my accident, when—you know, my son died. Well, before that time, she did not get it all her own way; no more did Greybarrow: But now—hush! Do you hear any one following us?"

Dora wished much that she could answer in the affirmative; but only the birds piped an occasional note, and the tiny streams tinkled their melodies in the near distance. The girl was feeling weary after her long climb up the mountain, and she began to wonder how soon she would be released.

"I don't hear anything; but it is getting late."

"Make haste, then," he said impatiently, as if Dora were leading the way. "Do you know that all these months I have been looking and looking for it? But my memory was gone; it was the cursed boat accident. I knew, and yet I didn't know; but to-day, to-day, when they left me alone, it came back to me. If I tell you, you'll remember. You are young, and you have not had time to be wicked. I may forget again, but I know it now. Keep close to the wall. Penelope was a fool. Ah, ah! You know that man, her husband? Husband, indeed! A mere nobody. I never thought Penelope would sink so low. She has got the pride of the devil in her. Eh! but so have I. Look, is that a broken stump? Stop, girl, and see if there's an old wasp's nest by the side."

Dora now felt really nervous, but what should she do? Where was this crazy old man leading her, and what was his object?

She looked furtively behind her to see if she could see a way of escape.

"Stoop, girl!" shouted her companion impatiently, "and tell me if you can see the nest?"

Dora complied, and found what she was directed to find.

"Yes, sir; here it is."

"Good; now bend to the left and you will strike upon an old wall."

Dora followed closely, wondering what was to be the next move. Her only idea was how best to get away.

In a few moments they came to a thick-set plantation of old beeches, which looked as if no one had approached them for centuries. There was no real path near to them, only a track evidently made by the foot of one man.

The King found it difficult to get along, but he was not to be daunted. Every moment he looked back to see that Dora was following him.

At last they reached a low grey wall, built of massive blocks of stone, but appearing as if it had once been begun and never continued, for it ended abruptly, close to a deep ditch, where ferns grew to a luxuriant height. On the other side, the wall ran at right angles to the boundary wall, but the underwood was so thick that it could not be followed to its starting-point, in this direction at all events.

"It's here," said the old man, with a low laugh of intense satisfaction. "You must swear, girl, to tell no one but Penelope what you have seen, and to reveal the place to no one, not even to her. Swear!"

Dora laughed. She was tickled by the idea of having to swear to keep secret the existence of an old wall.

"I can't swear, indeed I can't, but you can take my word—a Bethune never breaks promises, never."

"I only tell you for fear that I may forget again. My memory is gone, but to-day I remembered, to-morrow it might be gone; strange, eh? Now, girl, swear."

"I promise never to tell any one where this wall is," said Dora, smiling. "Never to tell even the Princess"—who must know very well, thought Dora.

"But you can tell her what you see. Now, come, don't mind the ditch."

Dora had no wish to descend into the deep, damp ditch, but she saw she was expected to do so. If only she could get rid of her companion it mattered not what she did, and soon she found herself by his side, whilst he began eagerly brushing

away the weeds and the ferns from the face of the old wall.

"It's here. Where are my tools? It can't be done without them."

He put his hand into a big coat pocket, and drew out a chisel. His trembling fingers would hardly steady the handle, but with Dora's help the stone he was tampering with began to move. Then, by some trick of the old man's hand, it appeared to turn as if on a pivot, and a deep cavity was thus revealed.

Dora now began to take greater interest in the proceedings. The old man's words were not all mere fancy. He did wish to show her something, and no girl is above the romantic pleasure of a discovery.

"What is in there?" she asked eagerly.

The King thrust his hand in and drew out a long tin box, somewhat in the shape of a coffin.

"Now look, girl. Tell Penelope what you have seen. Ay. She didn't believe in her father, so she sold herself for gold. What a fool she was, when all the time there was plenty here; plenty, I tell you."

He opened the box, which was not locked, and Dora saw in the dim light that it was full of canvas bags and queer legal papers. The old man opened one of the bags, and his fingers lovingly handled coin, for he took out a handful of gold pieces, and displayed them to the astonished girl.

"Penelope doesn't believe it," he muttered; "but it's true. There was gold enough, gold enough without her help; there's a fortune here, a fortune. The old Kings of Rothery weren't fools, I tell you, they laid by; and Penelope's great-aunt was a miser to the end of her life. But it was no use telling people. If the farmers know you are rich they cheat you, and they never knew it; Graybarrow did not know it, no more did Penelope. Ah! Good Heaven! what fools women can be."

"It is getting very damp, sir. Hadn't we better return to the Palace?" said Dora, who began to feel that something sad and sordid lay underneath this mad miser's mutterings.

"Yes, you're right, girl; Oldcorn will come prying round. He doesn't know, but he guesses. Did I make you swear?"

"No, sir, but I promised. I don't want to say anything to any one. It does not concern me."

"You're not such a fool for your age. I liked your face when you were stealing my ferns. Everything here is mine. I'm the King of Rothery. Graybarrow wants

to oust me, but he's not clever enough to do it. I let them play their little games. If they like to rebuild the old place without my help, so much the better for me. Eh, eh?"

He tried hastily to shove back the box, but Dora had to help him, and when all was finished the old man appeared weary.

"I must lean on your shoulder, girl, so. Now, could you find your way back alone?"

"No, sir, I do not think that I could, especially as it is getting so dusky."

"But I know it well, even though I'm—— what do they say I am up there?" he added, lowering his voice.

"Nothing, sir. Shall we turn to the right or to the left? There are two paths here."

"Come to the left, and then I'll show you your road. I must go on alone. There's Oldcorn will be coming, and he's a wicked spy. He suspects something."

They walked on a little while in silence, then the King pointed to a path which went northward through the wood.

"Follow that path, girl—and remember your promise."

"Thank you, sir," answered Dora, her heart bounding with joy at her near release.

"Wait a moment. That's your brother, you say. Well, then, I'll tell you something. Penelope's in love with him. She's caught. Eh, eh!" and the old man chuckled in a way which made Dora shiver.

Then he turned away, and began going as quickly as he could in the opposite direction, every now and then looking over his shoulder to see if Dora were watching him. For a few moments she did so, then, seized with a sudden overpowering fear, she ran on as fast as she could go, and as if evil beings were pursuing her.

## THE MOUNTAINS OF SKYE.

A MAN may go far in the holiday season to find an island so provocative as Skye of praise on the one hand, and condemnation on the other.

We gathered this much from the very beginning, as we sat to be slowly smoke-dried in the men's room at the "Sligachan Hotel" after a pretty smart soaking between Portree and the Coolins. Very varied were the remarks about the place that passed to and fro between the visitors, more or less established, who had just come in with their pipes from the dining-room.

There was one angler who said that in future he would spend his Augusts at

home, fly-fishing in the domestic wash-tub. At least he would do that ere again travelling north to Prince Charlie's island in search of "fush." He was clearly an irascible little person; yet there did seem some sense in his wrath as he finished up his diatribe by pointing at two very muddy pairs of trousers hanging in front of the fire, and added:

"Ever since I've been in this hole, my garments there have either been getting drenched on my legs or shrinking before the peats in an attempt to dry. It's not good enough!"

This raised a laugh. Two or three other men, who were in temper akin to the angler, agreed with him. They candidly avowed that Skye was a much over-praised country.

Not so, however, a brace of gentlemen with the skin loose on their noses. One of these wore spectacles and a smile of pity for the men who were casting stones at Skye's fair fame. The other turned the leaves of a number of the Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal.

The spectacled tourist of these two could at length bear it no longer.

"I tell you what," he interposed, "in my opinion, this is the most attractive spot in the British Isles. If any of you fellows had been with us on Scour Alaisdair yesterday, you'd have thought so too. The mistake you make is in coming here to fish instead of to do some climbing. For rock work Sligachan is an A1 centre; for trout—well, I believe what they give us for breakfast here are caught with a net. No one seems to get anything worth getting."

The other visitor with a skinned nose nodded approval, and glanced casually at the palm of his right hand.

"How is it going?" enquired one of the calumniators of Skye, also looking at this man's palm.

"First rate," was the reply.

The gentleman, we ascertained later, had had an awkward slip among the granite crags of Scour Alaisdair in descending. If he hadn't held on when he did, he would have broken his neck. As it was, he had a nasty gash from what palmists call the line of life to the base of his little finger. The misadventure had not in the least dulled his enthusiasm about the island of Flora Macdonald and Prince Charlie.

It was a pretty rough evening. One of the windows was open—for about fifteen pipes were adding to the thickness of the atmosphere—and periodically the wind

billowed in upon us with a roar, and raised not only our hair but even the newspapers and parti-coloured flies—made for trout—on the table. The pessimists among us looked up at each of the more furious of these gusts, and growled: "Nice, isn't it?" "What a charming place, to be sure!" and the like sarcasms. To the anglers it seemed perfectly insulting that Nature should thus concoct a storm without, as it appeared, the accompaniment of a single raindrop. The storm that had drenched us—the newcomers—had long ago run off the hills into the burns, and so into the Sligachan River and to the sea.

But it is mere waste of breath to cavil at the tricks of the weather. We went to bed in a hurricane, and woke the next morning amid surroundings of sweet and perfect peace. Not quite perfect though, for the midges were soon abroad to share the engaging scene with us. Fascinated by the sunny outlook, I took my kodak to the riverside before the breakfast-bell rang. A particularly smart, liver-complexioned Highland ox stood in tootempting an attitude against a background of white boulders, bustling stream, and distant mountain shape. But the ox was not to be caught. He gazed at the camera for one magnificent moment, then decamped with a bellow to join his comrades and the cows farther down the valley. I, for my part, turned to re-enter the hotel, and then for the first time saw the Cuchullins, or Coolins, at close quarters.

Viewed from the Oban steamer as it approaches Skye, these mountains are scarcely sensational, though bold enough in their outlines. But from Sligachan they are much more suggestive. I saw Scour na Gilleann—which, being interpreted, means the Peak of the Young Man—this day with a slight veil of snow-white vapour about its black cone-crest. But the veil could not dissemble the fine crags of the summit, and a practised eye could judge that on a still nearer acquaintance these crags would develop into neat and daring little pinnacles and precipices, such as a man may worthily exercise himself upon as a preliminary for yet more perilous, and therefore yet more delightful, work in the Alps and elsewhere. Mr. Gibson, a well-known cragsman in the north, says in the "Scottish Mountaineering Journal" that "in the matter of rock-climbing the Coolins may be more fitly compared with the Alps than our central Highlands with the Coolins." This seems a substantial



compliment to the Skye mountains, considering that their height is only about three thousand feet above sea level.

Of course the Coolins are not all the mountains in Skye. The Quiraing in the north is an upland mass broken into pinnacles, with a character of its own as marked as that of the Coolins. The Needle Rock of the Quiraing would frighten cragsmen and women who have already written Great Gable's Needle among their conquests. So, too, the Storr Mountain near the coast, with its isolated upstanding pinnacle, "the Old Man of Storr," must be mentioned with respect. Seen from the water, the Storr Rocks are as absorbing as anything in Skye. But they must all yield to the Coolins—this little circle of mountains embracing Loch Coruisk, their different summits connected by knife-blade edges and with precipices galore on all sides.

There was an American lady at breakfast in the hotel. She had driven over from Portree that morning. She hurried through her breakfast that she might hurry upon the shaggy little pony that awaited her outside, with a red-bearded and energetic gillie for its attendant. The gillie and pony were under contract to rush the American lady to Coruisk and back, including a boat trip to the southerly Prince Charlie's Cave, so that she might dine at Sligachan in the evening, and be again at Portree for the night in readiness for the five o'clock steamer to somewhere else the next morning.

"What like will it be?" echoed a gillie of whom, for talking's sake, we made enquiry as to the weather; "it'll be hot, sir—whatever."

And hot it was. The sun drew the perfume from the heather which mantles all the land of Skye, even as the day before the rain had made the walk from Portree odorous all the way with bog myrtle. The river sang lower and lower as the hours sped. Scour na Gilleann, to the west of Glen Sligachan became purple as the sky itself, and the streaks of greenery on Glamaig's clean-cut sides east of the glen were refreshing to behold.

We strolled hither and we strolled thither. From Glen Sligachan we lounged back to the hotel to lunch, and listen to the curses of the anglers, who had had a most wearing, profitless morning. Afterwards more strolling, with Scour na Gilleann always in the foreground.

An irresistible burn with a caldron in it—full of crystal clear water—compelled

bathing. But the midges drove us out of the water, even as they had driven us into it. Never were there such unresting plagues. They swarmed inquisitively about the pipe-bowl that was destined to slay or stupefy them; but they neither died nor lost their fiendish sensibility. And so we had to spend the beautiful evening hours just before dinner veiled like a Moslem lady.

It was a pleasant sight to see a score of gentle tourists groaning—and worse—in the face of the sunset sky of crimson and gold they had come forth from the inn to admire. Certain pretty countenances could hardly have been more disfigured by the attentions of mosquitoes than they were the next morning at breakfast, simply and solely by these despicable little winged atoms.

This day we extended our lounge to Coruisk itself, and were fain to admire the American lady's vigour in cramming such an excursion into her day's programme as a mere incident of it.

There were others bound for the same goal—a tan-coloured pedagogue and a lady with whom he had discussed Greek sculpture—with knowledge on both sides—over three or four successive meals. It seemed as if we might be blessed to witness the incubation of a young romance in their case. Each impressed the other clearly with a sense of congenial intellectuality. And so it had been contrived between them that the lady should ride to Coruisk on a sure-footed quadruped, and the gentleman should attend her on foot.

They promised soon to overtake us, who put our faith in our boots. But, as might be supposed, they did no such thing. It was expecting too much to expect them even to wish to do it, once they had the taste of such sweet untroubled communion upon their souls. Black Scour na Gilleann, with the sun-glisten on the mica of its granite; abrupt Marisco, with the bothie on its flank; and prodigious Blaven, whose rock precipices are matchless in Skye for their sublimity—these dumb comrades they could endure; but human forms and voices, hardly!

The river in the glen ran thinly on its stones, and there were no clouds to cast welcome shadows upon its water. One lunatic angler—he was very young—had come forth with his rod to do battle against midges and the clear, starved stream in combination. His enterprise was almost heroic. From our elevation we saw him below, knee-deep in the water, alternately

casting and sweeping his face longitudinally with a maddened promptitude.

"And these be pleasure-seekers!" we said in our pity as we tramped up the glen in the hot, soft air, with the perspiration guttering down our faces.

We admired Marsco, as who would not, seeing it under such fair conditions? From the bothie on the mountain slope—set near a pure spring, which makes a pretty little bog for the tourist to traverse—sallied forth two barelegged ladies to cut rushes in the valley. They were Highland lassies of the unspoiled kind—simple and shy, and unresting in their labour from dawn to dewy eve. But, alas! they had no English, or next to none. No matter if they missed that accomplishment. If the humble little cot with the thatch on it held a living for them all the year round, they had the wherewithal for entire contentment.

There is nothing finer in all Britain for its long bulk of precipices, innocent of all verdure, than Blaven. The rock swings itself upward, nearly three thousand feet of wall, from the glittering lake, green-rushed and heather-banked. The wall is strenuously seamed; deep-cut, zigzagging crevices tear it from top to bottom; yet a man must have strong nerves to attempt to scale it.

Later we saw the monarch to even more advantage when we had climbed the col of Drumbhain and stood a thousand feet above the valley with Blaven facing us, but a mile or so distant, and nothing between us and its tremendous wall.

But, indeed, this was a day of sensational prospects. From Drumbhain we saw the Coolins as it were, from the centre of their semicircle. Such a jagged, forbidding curve of peaks—forbidding from one aspect only, of course—one may hardly match anywhere. Each mountain seemed to vie with its neighbour in the acuteness of angle of its final crest. Their uniformity of height was also a circumstance to wonder at. Though the summit of one might be a mere walking-stick of a crag shot up from a convenient shoulder, the next one, springing perchance in a single glorious incline from Coruisk's waters, dressed its topmost height so narrowly level with it that you might almost have set a huge billiard-table on the pair of crests and played the game with confidence.

From Drumbhain we took long reckless strides down the mountain side until Coruisk's sequestered water was reached. We were certainly hours ahead of our more intellectual friends.

As many people know, Scott has the following among other lines on Loch Coruisk:

For all is rocks at random thrown,  
Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone,  
As if were here denied  
The summer sun, the spring's sweet dew,  
That clothe with many a varied hue  
The bleakest mountain side.

However, on this day the sun turned the loch into a dazzling mirror, and we were not awed at all. I have seen the Thames by London Bridge look more thrilling. The lonely pool was on its best behaviour, good to bathe and dabble in, and so smooth that we could have sent a paper boat from its one shore to the opposite shore without risk of shipwreck.

We did not cavil at this state of affairs. The sublime is all very well if it can be enjoyed without great discomfort. To see Coruisk as Scott saw it means facing divers hazards of storm and cloud, which one is not always willing to encounter. We found our pleasure in basking, lazy eating and drinking, smoking, and staring at the Old Man of Skye, that alluring—but not readily accessible—tooth of rock on the very top of Scour Dearg. Perhaps in the year half-a-dozen cragsmen scale Scour Dearg and his tooth—which is precipitous three hundred feet on one side and one hundred feet on the other—and leave their cards behind them for the eagles. But it is no ordinary task.

Though we missed Coruisk in its mad moods, we returned to Sligachan in the gloaming contented. The mendacious pedagogue and his lady friend had not started, after all. They had spent the day instead in a cool arbour, with intellectual talk and the midges.

Coruisk put us in the humour for Scour na Gillean, and we plotted against the mountain that night in the smoking-room. But the weather suddenly conspired against us in our turn, and for three successive days we had to fish in default. There was a spate, and everything dripped in the smoking-room. The roar of the river sounded at the dinner-table like the playful tumbling of mountains against each other by immeasurable Titans.

The gentlemen with the peeled noses went off in disgust on the third day of continuous rain. They gave us some advice ere they left—advice which we forgot with disgraceful celerity. Who wants to profit by other people's experience—whether in mountain-climbing or the general pains and pleasures of existence?

On the fourth day, however, we started and all was auspicious. The Old Man of Storr soon showed in the north to tell us of our upward progress over the heather moorland to the base of the mountain proper.

Now, there are two or three routes to Scour na Gillean, but only one for untrained mountaineers. We chose the simplest.

Even that cost us trouble enough. We had our bearings correctly, and clambered over the huge boulders with sharp edges which represent the last stage but one of the ascent. Then we paused for an undue length of time to smoke and contemplate the mountain's head.

It is certainly a rugged and captivating head, this of Scour na Gillean. You have no idea of it until you are, so to speak, on its shoulders. Then, if you are of common flesh and blood, you gaze at it and admit to yourself that you wish you had been to the top and were safely back again. I can compare it to nothing but a huge house—say two hundred feet high—with walls just a little out of the perpendicular, and nicks and rifts and ledges here and there for the convenience of strong-headed persons who are determined to ascend it.

This is the easiest way of getting up. But there are other ways. While we smoked and assured ourselves that it must be much simpler than it looks—as it is, in fact—we also glanced out of the corners of our eyes at the black, isolated masses of rock which constitute "the pinnacle route" to the summit. They were really too much for our feelings, these pinnacles.

We went up hand-over-hand at length, by cracks and chimneys, by arm power and leg leverage, and in a few minutes we had our reward. We were on the mossy final boulder, with its broken flag string, its tiny cairn, and its tin box containing the names of those of our recent predecessors who prided themselves on their achievement.

It is a thrilling sort of perch. You can hardly help dangling your legs over a precipice if there are two or three persons on the top. The sense of height may nowhere be enjoyed to more perfection than here.

Now we could have borne this very well if the wind had not sprung up. This fact was quite disturbing to us. It almost affected our equilibrium, and there was no telling what it might not do if it veered and caught us strongly in our return from the Scour's head to his shoulders.

We therefore made but a brief stay on the summit, though long enough to appre-

ciate the stern grandeur of Lotta Corrie, and the sensational surroundings of the different edges which link together the various peaks of the Coolins. Eagles we saw none, nor did we expect to see any. But we saw about half Skye, and marvelled at its treelessness.

Long ere we were again on unsensational ground, Scour na Gillean had taken respectable rank in our minds among the other mountains we had climbed. I don't know which of us made the mistake, but we got so startlingly near the northern precipices of the summit that we had to clamber back and try again. But we were at the dinner-table that evening with no worse misadventure than peeled noses.

The next day the rain set in once more. The weather is certainly awkward in this attractive island. It must have been in a fit of weather pique that a tourist wrote in the visitors' book here the series of clever verses which his successors read with such mixed feelings:

Land of cunning, crafty bodies,  
Foes to all ungodly fun,  
Those who sum up man's whole duty—  
Heaven, hell, and number one.

Land of psalms and drowsy sermons,  
Pawky wits and snuffy bores,  
Faur-gaun chieftans so fond of Scotland,  
That they leave it fast by scores!

There is, however, the antidote for this poison on the same page:

Land of chivalry and freedom,  
Land of old historic fame,  
May your noble sons and daughters  
Long preserve their honoured name.  
Etc., etc.

Skye—like Scotland herself—has, since men peopled it, seen much that is creditable, and at least something discreditable to its inhabitants. The very names of the Coolins and their glens tell of the bloody feuds of the ancient chieftains of her clans. I suppose Flora Macdonald may well be set against these memories for Skye's redemption.

As for the Coolins, they are not to be remembered without a certain affection. I hope, ere long, to see more of them and their rugged charms.

## LIZ.

### A COMPLETE STORY.

"YOU are a good little thing, Cinderella!"

"Lor, Miss 'Olme, me! You should 'ear missis; you wouldn't think so then."

"I do hear 'missis,' very often, and I

am afraid she sometimes finds you very tiresome, but when you are older, Cinderella, you will understand that people judge others by what those others are to them, and I find you very good, though you may not be good in general. This shows that the more people you are good to, the better character you will get, whether you deserve it or not."

Cinderella looked puzzled. She was not unused to this sensation of groping in the dark, but at such times she felt that Miss Holme was not purposely puzzling her, but was talking to herself quite as much as she was speaking to her. Furthermore she considered all Miss Holme's sayings, dark or otherwise, as the utterances of the highest wisdom, worthy of much consideration, and, whenever they took the form of command or precept, to be carried out as faithfully as possible.

There was something, however, this little unfeathered London sparrow noted and did understand. The lodger had been out all day, she had returned with white face and heavy steps, and having given Cinderella a word of praise for her bustling welcome, had begun to talk in enigmas. Cinderella tilted her head on one side and looked at Miss Holme with a pair of bright sharp eyes, an attitude which gave her the appearance of an inquisitive little bird.

"You looks wore out," she said sympathetically.

"I am 'wore' out, and I have had no luck to-day, my dear."

"Never you mind, miss, that'll come in a lump, all at wunst, you see if it don't," said the child, nodding her head sagely.

"All things come to those who wait—if they don't die first. Ah, well, Cinderella, we will hope you are a faithful prophetess, and that the lump will come soon."

"'Corse it will, miss. Now you git yer tes, an' I'll come up presently and take away the things."

Cinderella—prison-born, gutter-bred, older at fifteen than many women who could number twice her years; ill fed, ill clad, ill housed; all her life sent from pillar to post, and from post to pillar; the very shuttlecock of fortune, exposed to every temptation under the sun, with no single safeguard to protect her except a wholesome fear of the law and her own natural instincts which made for right. A waif, a stray, consistently neglected by that society which would sternly vindicate the slightest dereliction from its laws, a helpless little human creature who all through its hapless

babyhood and young childhood had never felt loving lips pressed on its tiny cheek, had never known what it was to be caressed and called by endearing names, but who had been buffeted and kicked and cursed.

She had never been allowed to forget that she was born in gaol, and that her mother had deserted her at the age of ten, leaving her, a little wizened old woman, to get her living as best or as worst she could.

And what a living it had been! A meal for minding a baby, a halfpenny for running errands, an old frock or a shake-down in an overcrowded room in payment for a day's work, a few coppers for cleaning doorsteps, the shelter of an empty house, the selling of matches, the gleaning of garbage heaps in the markets! Then one day the child's luck turned, and, from being an industrious little "stepper" and faithful runner of errands, she got taken in as day-girl, and finally promoted to the post of maid-of-all-work in the poor lodging-house where Miss Holme found her.

In the slums where she had dwelt she had been known as "Liz," though whether she had a baptismal right to that or any other name is doubtful, but Miss Holme called her Cinderella, and told her the old fairy story, which so pleased and excited the child's fancy that she grew quite proud of her nickname.

Miss Holme was a revelation to Liz. She was sharp enough to know that the lodger had "come down" in the world; that she had not always lived in a bed-sitting room, and fed upon weak tea, bread, and herrings, with an occasional launching out into other cheap delicacies. Miss Holme had not many clothes, but those she had were fine and dainty, the like of which Liz had never seen before; her hands and feet, too, were quite different from those of the other people Liz had known, and her voice, well, "it beat everything, even the flute wot the man played outside the public-houses."

The most remarkable thing about the lodger was her passion for soap and water. Liz at first regarded it as a species of harmless lunacy, but after a while, fired by both precept and example, Liz herself became a convert, and, like all converts, was so eaten up with zeal that her skin usually shone with soap and friction. It was wonderful, too, the things that Miss Holme did with a needle and thread to Liz's wardrobe; but the greatest wonder of all was that the lodger talked to her in a manner she had never heard before, and on



one never-to-be-forgotten occasion, Miss Holme had kissed her.

Liz could never remember being kissed before by any one older than herself. She grew quite red, and her eyes filled with unwon'ted tears as with quivering lips she ejaculated :

"Oh, Miss 'Olme !"

And then Miss Holme had patted her cheek, and said :

"You are lonely, and I am lonely, little Cinderella, which is a strong reason why we should be friends."

Liz noticed that the lodger's eyes were wet, too. With inborn delicacy the child said nothing, but from that day the whole of her loving heart was given entirely to Miss Holme, given with the fervour and passion of a devotee.

Left alone, the lodger began her meal. Indeed, she was weary and faint as much with hunger as with fatigue. But the coarse food repelled her, and she soon left the table and seated herself before the fire.

She was only twenty-three, this girl, and already very weary of life. The battle was going hardly with her. Friendless and forlorn, the loneliness of her lot weighed upon her even more heavily than the failure of her hopes and ambition. For the last three years she had fought unaided, uncheered by word or thought. The few distant relatives she possessed ignored her, because she was not like them and because she was poor. Proud, sensitive, she resolved henceforth to tread her path alone, and alone she lived in the cruel whirlpool of London. She possessed just enough means to keep body and soul together, while she devoted all her strength to the art she loved so well.

Sometimes she got a story or an article accepted by a magazine or journal, and the proceeds made gala days for her, when she dreamed of success and of fame. But her writing was uncertain, sometimes morbid, the result of the unnatural, unhealthy, repressed life she was forced to lead. With no friend to whom she could reveal the burthens that oppressed her, she poured them out in all their bitterness on paper, and the world is only interested in success.

Then, by degrees, the power of writing left her. Her mind, overburdened with cares, with heart-sickness, with a bitter sense of desolation, refused to work ; her brain grew numb ; and for hours she would sit staring helplessly at the blank sheets of paper which seemed to stare back at

her in hideous mockery. She tried other things, teaching, companionship, anything ; but want of training, inexperience, lack of interest pushed her out of the already over-crowded market.

At last she lost heart altogether. She did not realise it then, but afterwards she knew that the only thing which saved her from sinking into the dull apathy of despair was the love of the poor drudge whom she had named Cinderella.

Poor ignorant little waif that she was, she yet had in her some latent sense of refinement that kept her ignorance from being repulsive. The evil that she had seen seemed to have passed her by, leaving her unstained by its crimson hue. Such beautiful things as love, and trust, and faith, which had never been awakened in her heart before, sprang full-grown into life under the touch of Katherine Holme's hand, and by reason of that very love and faith and trust, the lodger felt that she was bound to fight on.

But it was dreary work, and she grew frightened at the thought of the long years which perhaps stretched before her. If she could but throw off the burthen and lie down to sleep like a tired child !

"'Ave yer done, miss ? Lor, you ain't eat much ! Worn't it cooked right ?"

The shadow fell from the lodger's face, and she turned with a smile to answer Liz, who stood by the table, a very picture of disappointment.

"It was cooked very nicely, Cinderella, but I am too tired to eat much to-night, I think."

"It's bad to be like that," said the child with quite a motherly air. "I am, sometimes, when I feels all bones, and every one on 'em an ache. You'd better git to bed early ; I only wishes as I could, too."

"Why can't you ?"

"Missis 'as gone to the theayter, and I've got to wait up for her. She do worrit, but she don't go hout very often, I will say that for her."

"No, she does not go out often, as you say, and if she 'worrits,' I am afraid in turn she has a lot to 'worrit' her."

"She do, miss, she do indeed. All the lodgers ain't like you, and it's allus those as pays the wust and the most onregular as gives theirselves the most airs."

Miss Holme smiled. She was very tired, very heart-sick and depressed, but she knew how to make Liz happy for a brief hour, and if you cannot be happy yourself, perhaps the next best thing is to make some one else happy.

"Suppose you take away my tea-things, Cinderella, wash them, and do everything downstairs you have to do, and then come back and wait here for Mrs. Blakey."

"Oh, miss, may I really?" cried Liz delightedly.

"Yes, really, and perhaps I will tell you a story," said Miss Holme, and Liz hurried away all the more speedily to return.

The child interested the lodger, who was sincerely desirous of doing something to improve her condition and to lessen her ignorance. But this was not easy, for there is nothing more difficult than for educated persons to make themselves understood by the very ignorant. What is to the one ordinary language and ideas is to the other hopelessly unintelligible, therefore to be mistrusted. Liz had no time to devote to learning in the ordinary way; such arts as reading or writing must for ever remain mysteries to her, but by dressing elementary principles in the garb of a simple story, Miss Holme had done something towards awakening Liz's intellectual and moral faculties.

The most terrible thing to combat was her extreme age. Apparently Liz had never been young. On her return, as she crouched close to the fender, this impression seemed to gain on Miss Holme, making her feel years her visitor's junior.

"What are your earliest recollections, Cinderella? I mean, what is the thing you can first remember?" she asked.

Liz puckered her brows in an endeavour to rescue something concrete from a chaos of nebulous impression, but the habit of sequential thought was new to her. Before she knew the lodger, things had simply floated through her brain without any order, and apparently by their own volition.

"I dunno," she said slowly. "It's mostly the streets, and they allus seem cold, an' wet, an' dark, 'cept where the public's wos. We, mother an' me, used to walk about beggin' till she got coppers enough, then she went into a pub till the lot wos gone agin."

"You were not much worse off when she left you, then?" the lodger said, repressing a shudder.

"Not a bit," said Liz, shaking her head, "an' I didn't get whacked so much. You see, miss, if I didn't look miserable enuff, she'd pinch me to make me cry, and that fetched the pennies out of people's pockets. Some are orful soft when they see a kid cryin'."

"What made you give up begging when

you were left alone?" Miss Holme enquired.

"I didn't like it," said Liz. "It was just as 'ard work as anythink else, an' I'd 'ad more than enuff on it. I'd rather do somethink real like," she added.

"You are quite right, Cinderella; real work is a satisfaction in itself, but sham work is a miserable thing. I know that."

Liz opened her eyes.

"I don't think you know much about sham work, miss," she said.

"Not of your sort, perhaps," said Miss Holme sadly, "but there are as many kinds of sham work as there are of real work, Cinderella, and every one is tempted to do some occasionally. Now I will tell you the story I promised."

Liz's eyes sparkled with delight. A story from the lodger was to her the highest bliss, and for the next hour at least she was a happy child, led by a kindly hand through the fields of beautiful thought and fancy, put into language suited to her stunted intellectual growth.

It was late before Liz got to bed, and no sooner had she laid her weary little head on her hard pillow than she was asleep. She always slept that heavy sleep which comes to the young whose days are passed in hard physical toll; heavy, dreamless, so that when she was roused in the morning, it seemed to her that she had only been sleeping a few minutes.

But this night, even the few minutes seemed shorter than usual when she was awakened by a loud knocking, which she had heard for some time before it thoroughly roused her. She started up in the little truckle bed and rubbed her eyes, which began to smart in a strange fashion. The kitchen was still dark, but the air was thick and pungent with hot smoke. In another moment the truth burst upon the child. The knocking was not her mistress rousing her, it was some one hammering at the street door without a moment's cessation, and the smoke and heat told why only too plainly.

With a sob of terror Liz huddled on one or two of her poor garments, and opening the kitchen door, ran into a small room where her mistress slept, and which was situated between the kitchen and scullery. With lightning rapidity, she roused the woman and helped her into some clothing. As the pair approached the staircase they were driven back by the reeking smoke, which seemed to scorch them with its hot breath.

"This way," her mistress cried, and seizing Liz by the arm she hastened back to the kitchen, and unbolting the area door they rushed up the steps into the street.

By this time the other inmates had been roused and were standing huddled together in a frightened knot on the opposite side of the road, as with bitter lamentations they watched the fire getting firm hold of the house which contained nearly all their worldly possessions.

"Where's Miss 'Olme?" cried Liz, as her eyes travelled over the group without finding the figure she sought.

"I don't know," said a man. "As I passed I banged on her door loud enough to wake the dead. She must have followed us down."

"Then where is she?" persisted the child shrilly.

No one knew.

With throbbing heart Liz dashed wildly amongst the people, but Miss Holme was not there.

"She wouldn't 'ave gone off without knowing as every one was out," Liz said to herself; "she ain't that sort."

She ran up to a policeman who was keeping the crowd from the pathway in front of the burning house.

"There's a lady inside," she said; "second floor, back."

"No, there isn't, my girl, every one is down. Don't you frighten yourself," he added kindly to the excited little creature.

"There is, there is, I tell you. Let me go."

The man caught hold of her as she was darting past him. Quick as thought the old gutter instincts reasserted their supremacy, and turning her head, Liz fastened her teeth in the man's hand.

With an exclamation of pain he released his grasp, and before he could recover from his surprise she was up the steps and had disappeared into the house.

A cry of horror broke from the crowd. The word went round that there was some one left in the place, and some men rushed to a neighbouring builder's yard for a ladder.

Meanwhile Liz fought her way almost inch by inch through the blinding smoke. She could see nothing, and all the blood in her body seemed to surge to her ears as she laboured heavily for her breath. As she passed a door on the first floor, an angry tongue of flame leaped out at her, luridly dividing the smoke for an instant. She avoided it and sped on her way with one thought filling her mind through it

all. Miss Holme had been in the habit of locking her door, but as she was asleep before Liz left the room, it was possible she had not done so. "If she has, oh, what shall I do!" thought the child.

At last the door was reached, and grasping the handle, Liz found to her joy that it yielded to her touch. The room was full of smoke, so that she had to grope her way to the bed, on which, sure enough, she felt Miss Holme. Liz shook her violently without eliciting any response. Evidently she was quite insensible.

Somehow, she scarcely knew how, Liz managed to roll the lodger on to a blanket, which she roughly knotted together. With the corners as a purchase, she half dragged, half carried the inanimate form the few yards which separated this room from the one in front, for Liz knew that it was from the street alone that help could come.

In this room the smoke was not so dense, and, as Liz flung up the window, a ringing cheer from the people below heralded the arrival of a long ladder. Eager hands placed it in position, and careless of the flames already darting from the lower windows, a policeman ascended to where the child stood.

"Ere she is," Liz cried triumphantly; "take hold."

With some difficulty the man succeeded in balancing his burden.

"Wait, I'll be back again directly for you," he said, as he slowly began to descend.

Liz watched him for a second, then suddenly she heard an angry roar behind her, and felt an intolerable heat which scorched her flesh. The object of her love in safety, Liz lost her self-possession. With a cry of terror she sprang on to the window-sill. The policeman had just placed his load in the outstretched arms of those below, and was turning to re-ascend the ladder, unheeding the flames, which were by this time licking its rungs, when the child, glancing down into what seemed a pit of fire, lost her balance, and with a piteous cry, fell on to the stones beneath.

A few hours later Liz lay on a bed in a hospital ward.

"No, she wasn't in any pain," she said, "and was quite happy."

So happy she could not understand why Miss Holme looked so sorrowful, or the tall doctor at the foot of the bed so serious. Liz was rather astonished to find that she could not move her legs at all, and that her

hands were not very strong either, still she supposed they would come all right, because the big gentleman and the white-capped nurse looked as though they could do anything between them.

Meanwhile she lay quite still, and was very happy. Indeed, she was so clear and collected in her mind, and her voice sounded so strong, that Miss Holme had drawn this new doctor aside and asked him, as she had already asked the house surgeon, if he was sure nothing could be done. But he shook his head gently, and she returned to the bedside with her eyes full of tears.

"Why, you're cryin'! You ain't 'urt anywhere, are you?" asked Liz anxiously.

"No, dear, I am not hurt anywhere, thanks to your bravery; but, oh, little Cinderella, you are hurt—badly hurt!"

"Am I?" said the child wonderingly; "I don't feel it." Then after a pause she quietly asked: "Do you mean, miss, as I ain't goin' to git better?"

"I am afraid not, Cinderella," said the lodger, gently stroking the poor little rough hand she held in hers.

Liz was quiet for a moment, but no shade of fear crossed her face.

"Don't you trouble about it, Miss 'Olme. I don't mind—much," she said at last.

The doctor looked quickly at Miss Holme.

"Holme!" he said. "Is that your name?"

"Yes; Katherine Holme."

"Good heavens! I might have seen the likeness if I had looked at you before. For the last three years I have been searching all over England for you."

Miss Holme looked at him in astonishment.

"For me?" she said. "I do not know you."

"Did your mother never speak to you of an old friend of hers, a friend long before she met your father? We were boy and girl together, and then—well, circumstances parted us. She married, and I went to walk the hospitals," he finished abruptly.

"You must be Arthur Leslie," said the girl.

"Yes, I am Arthur Leslie. Your mother wrote to me shortly before she died, asking me to befriend her child. I was abroad at the time, and the letter was forwarded on from place to place till it was months old before it reached me. When I got back I hastened at once to

Dawlish, only to find your mother dead and you gone. I followed you up, till at last you disappeared, leaving no trace behind."

Liz had been listening intently to the conversation. She did not quite understand it all, but the fact that here apparently was a friend for Miss Holme was all she cared about. She turned her eyes towards the doctor.

"Are you goin' to be a friend to 'er?" she asked, with a sharp, business-like little air, which sat strangely upon her at such a time.

"Indeed I am, if she will let me," he answered earnestly.

"She's lonely, and often miser'ble. I shall go all the easier if I know there's some one to look arter 'er," pursued the child, with a return to the old-fashioned, motherly manner she often adopted towards the lodger.

"She need never be lonely any more, and, if it lies in my power to prevent it, she shall never be miserable either," he said, speaking to Liz, but looking at the other girl.

Miss Holme opened her lips to speak, but Liz had not finished yet.

"Is that a promise?" she asked.

"It is a most solemn promise, my dear," the doctor said, laying his hand on hers. "I, too, am a lonely old man, and if my old friend's child will take a daughter's place in my heart, she will make me happier than I have been for many years."

"I know you quite well, Dr. Leslie, although I have never seen you before, and there is no one in the world to whom I could turn so readily as to yourself. I do not think it will be difficult for my mother's daughter to learn to love you. I—I have been very unhappy since my mother died."

Miss Holme broke off, but as the two clasped hands across the dying child, Dr. Leslie's sympathetic face showed that he understood.

"That's all right," said Liz. "Oh, my dear, I am that 'appy!"

She heaved a sigh as she spoke, and the nurse moved a little nearer. Miss Holme gave a half-frightened glance of enquiry at the doctor, who answered it by an almost imperceptible nod.

"Dear little Cinderella, how good you have always been to me," Miss Holme said in a broken voice.

"It worn't nothink, miss. I allus wanted to do something for you," Liz



said, looking at Miss Holmes with eyes full of love. "If I 'adn't tumbled off the ladder I shouldn't 'ave been brought 'ere, and then you wouldn't 'a met 'im," she said after a pause.

"No," said Miss Holmes. "All my good things I owe to you, dear child."

"Then I'm glad, I'm glad—glad—glad," and with the word still lingering in her throat Liz fell back dead.

### THE LAND OF THE KING'S CHILDREN.

THE beetling crags of purple mountain ranges guard the beautiful capital of classic Rajputana, "the land of the King's children" and the most ancient native dynasty of India. The romantic scenery which surrounds Jeypore makes an appropriate setting for the dramatic history built up through countless ages on this sacred soil, once trodden, according to Hindu tradition, by the footsteps of the gods, who descended to earth in the likeness of men and originated the royal Rajput race.

The monsoon has wept itself away, and the green robe of earth wears that transient freshness fated to vanish like the dews of dawn beneath the stress of sun and dust, as the last of the lingering clouds disappears on the northern horizon. Foaming streams swirl through the deep "nullahs" which cleave the stony flanks of the rugged heights, and blue lakes gleam like sapphires from a wild moorland where flaxen plumes of pampas grass rustle in the balmy breeze. Red-legged cranes, wading in the shallow water, toss the sparkling drops over their soft grey plumage, and gorgeous peacocks sun themselves on a pale green carpet of springing corn. Antelopes bound lightly into the dark depths of the tiger-haunted jungle which clothes the lower spurs of the mountain chain; and a trading caravan, armed with the Rajput shield and spear, gives a touch of human life to the lonely landscape, as the horses and camels of the gaily-clad cavalcade relieve the monotony of the scene with scarlet trappings and jingling bells. The beauty of local costume becomes increasingly apparent as we approach Jeypore, and the brilliant garb of the martial-looking men and graceful women transports us in fancy to the palmy days of that historic past when the "City of Victory" reached the meridian of her

splendour. Beauty of architecture and wealth of colour combine to render the capital of Rajputana one of the fairest cities in the East. Massive walls and lofty towers conceal the loveliness of the interior edifices, and the fantastic line of rose-coloured palaces towering above the noble main street, known as the Ruby Chauk, dawns upon the eye with the abruptness of a dramatic surprise. The deep flush which bathes the pierced and fretted stone is enhanced by the cloudless blue of the Indian sky, and forms the groundwork of elaborate Arabesque ornamentation in white chunam on every level surface. The Ruby Chauk, forty yards in width, runs through the entire length of the town, crossed at right angles by the Amber Chauk, another broad thoroughfare lined with buildings of fanciful architecture, and the Maharajah's Palace in the centre of the city covers about a seventh part of the total area.

The beautiful Audience Chamber of white marble, and the stately hall of the nobles supported by rows of polished columns, rise from two outer courts where sculptured fountains play amid clustering palms, and the Silver Palace, built round the central quadrangle, resembles some enchanted pile of fairyland. Rose and white balconies of chiselled embroidery, fragile as spun glass, swing like webs of lace between aerial turrets, and the elaborate tracery of oriel windows shows the same delicacy of design and execution. Myriad slender shafts of blue-veined alabaster and rose-tinted stone surrounded by fretted arcades carry out the prevailing idea of airy lightness, and the snowy cupolas above that sanctum sanctorum in the heart of the building known as "the Crown of the Palace," look as though a breath would blow them away like balls of thistledown into the blue vault of heaven. Priceless treasures are contained within the walls of the Maharajah's princely abode, and a volume of the Mahabharata, one of the two great epic poems of ancient India, is the gem of the historic collection. This curiously illuminated manuscript, written in Persian character, was executed by command of the Emperor Akbar, who paid a lac of rupees, a sum equivalent to forty thousand pounds sterling, to the scribe who accomplished the laborious task. Golden margins and brilliant colours glow with unfaded freshness, and the delicacy of the poetical calligraphy suggests the utmost refinement of culture. Antique portraits

on silver, copper, shell, and foil decorate the marble walls of the "Hall of Splendour," which forms a noble vestibule to the Shish Mahal, a glass pavilion glittering with crystal chandeliers multiplied by reflection in countless mirrors. Marble alcoves overlook a green pleasure shaded by a plantation, where the scarlet stars of blossoming poinsettias brighten the gloom of the banyan-trees which form a roof of verdure with interlacing boughs. Across the secluded enclosure another wing of the great palace contains a noble billiard-room, which appears a somewhat incongruous feature in the residence of an Indian prince. The dining-rooms of the Maharajah and his five wives, though luxuriously furnished, display the usual combination of display and disorder which characterises native life. The ladies have evidently feasted on the floor, and the litter of rice, crumbs, and mysterious scraps of unknown and suspicious-looking articles of local consumption is a gradual accumulation from numerous banquets eaten on the unswept carpets of richest velvet pile. The spacious gardens with their flowers and fountains, hedges of roses, and thickets of palm, are laid out with extraordinary care and taste on the borders of a broad blue tank, which ripples up to the marble steps and balustrades of a supplementary mansion, known as the Cloud Palace, and occupied by a hundred dancing-girls, who belong to the Maharajah's household.

After a glance at the splendid stud of three hundred horses and the gold and silver carriages of State, we visit a cage of immense tigers caught in the Gulta Pass, a deep gorge visible in the nearest mountain chain beneath the frowning bastions of Tiger Fort.

The great Temple of Ganesh, the elephant-headed god of wisdom, is the favourite shrine of the Rajput, but the presence of mosques and minarets perpetuates the Moslem influence exercised by the royal house of Delhi, and cemented by an alliance with the daughter of a Rajput Maharajah. The beautiful streets blaze with colour as brown forms, robed in every shade of red, blue, and violet, orange, yellow, and green, gather round fountain and fig-tree; or stroll down the sunny highway in the leisurely fashion of the East. Elephants, camels, and cows mingle with the particoloured throng, and the haughty bearing of innumerable soldiers, who dash past with jingling accoutrements on spirited Arab horses, maintains the character of

this historic province, where equestrian skill is proverbial, and every man considers himself a warrior and a prince.

Beyond the splendid Saracenic pile of Hawah Mahal, the "Palace of the Winds," occupied by the mother of the monarch, a mounted troop with pennons flying on glittering spears, clatters along in a cloud of dust. An open barouche follows, drawn by prancing bays, and a portly-looking gentleman in frock-coat, pale blue turban, and lavender kids, who lolls back on the velvet cushions, is the divine "Child of the Sun," the haughty Maharajah of Jeypore, whose claim to supernatural origin is recognised by every subject of his realm. A stern, brown face, with full red lips and blazing black eyes, turns towards us for a moment as one lavender hand is laid on the Royal brow in acknowledgement of our salutations, but English obtuseness fails to perceive the mystic halo of divinity which is supposed to encircle the Prince's turbaned head. The Royal pedigree may be traced back through a genealogy of one hundred and thirty-one names in a direct line to Kisa, the second son of Rama Chundra, the fifth Avâtar of the god Vishnu, and traditionally begotten by the great luminary regarded in the infancy of the world as the ever-present god of India. The chivalrous deeds of Rama Chundra, the priestly hero of the Brahmins in his life as a divine incarnation, are sung in the noble Indian epic of the Ramayana, which shares the fame of the Mahabharata. An Emperor of Delhi conferred upon the Maharajah of Jeypore the title of "One and a quarter," still proudly borne by his descendants. The curious appellation signified that in consequence of supernatural descent, this historic line exceeded the rest of human kind by the quarter or fourth part in the pedigree which represents the divine element. It was even considered a condescension when a Rajput Princess married one of the Great Moguls, and innumerable female children of Rajput race were annually put to death because no husbands of equal rank could be found for them.

In the early days of India the women were comparatively free and independent, even exercising uncontrolled choice in marriage. This power of selection was called "Swayamvara," and a tournament was arranged in order that the suitors might distinguish themselves in some feat of skill or courage, after which they awaited the decision of the damsel.

Professor Monier Williams states as a fact that through the heroic period of Indian history, and up to the beginning of the Christian era, women had many privileges from which they were subsequently excluded. They were not shut out from the light of heaven behind the folds of a purdah or the walls of a zenana, and Sanskrit dramas confirm the theory that the better classes received some education, and though speaking the provincial dialects among themselves, were addressed by the pundits in Sanskrit, and evidently understood the learned language perfectly. They appeared unveiled in public. The germ of the principle which prescribed female imprisonment in a zenana exists in the famous code of Manu, the mythical law-giver of the Brahmin caste, which declared him to be the grandson of Brahma; but the system of seclusion only became general after the Mohammedan conquest. Then; partly as a security from the tyranny of their conquerors, and partly from the example of Mohammedan custom; the Indian women of the higher classes were rigidly condemned to a perpetual cloistral enclosure. The first use that a Hindu made of his acquired wealth was to shut up the ladies of his household; but the custom obtained by slow degrees in Rajputana.

The present Maharajah, unfettered by the stereotyped ideas of the Indian past, has endowed his capital with an elaborate system of waterworks, a gas holder and a school of art, without detracting from the pictorial beauty of an Oriental city, rich in relics of bygone days and jealously conservative of all that upholds her native dignity. Brilliant bazaars with their artistic specialties of marble and glass mosaic, ebony inlaid with silver, and glittering spangle-work of coloured foil, surround the ruins of the great Hindu observatory, where gigantic azimuth circles and altitude pillars rise from weed-grown courts, in which Brahmin seers and astrologers of olden time worked out their mysterious problems, and cast the horoscopes of the heaven-born race beneath the open canopy of the star-spangled sky.

As we descend the Ruby Chank at sunset, the unearthly radiance which suffuses the magnificent street suggests the origin of its appropriate name. A golden haze bathes earth and sky in a sea of glory, and the rose-red palaces absorb rather than reflect the glowing light, until the opaque solidity of each massive edifice

appears fused into the crimson translucence of molten jewels, and the unfathomable depths of carmine splendour resemble the red heart of a fiery furnace.

As the pageant of colour fades away, and the purple veil of the brief Indian twilight falls over the city, the dismal clank of chains drowns the mingled noises of the street, as crowds of fettered convicts, escorted by armed warders and mounted soldiers with heavy muskets, return from their daily toil to the great prison outside the walls. Though a few scowling and beetle-browed faces suggest infinite capacities of villainy, a jaunty air of reckless unconcern distinguishes the majority of the criminals, and from the contemptuous remarks "an passant," made with reference to the "Sahib-lok," and translated for our benefit by the guide, it appears that the Rajput even under the humiliation of imprisonment is still sustained by the proud consciousness of innate superiority to the common herd of men.

The heavy dew still sparkles on the palms and flowers of the great public gardens as we start for the ancient capital of Ambar, from which a mediæval Maharajah removed his Court to Jeypore. Feathery neem-trees border the road, and clumps of bristling cactus give a touch of barbaric fierceness to the rocky landscape. Slender minarets, known as "the Delhi Milestones," mark the seven miles which extend between the two cities, and the sacred landmarks erected for the pilgrims who visited the shrines of Ambar also commemorate the Rajput Saltana, who deigned to bestow her hand upon the most powerful monarch of the East, himself a parvenu of mushroom stock when measured by the standard of Rajputana's historic dynasty, with a lineage lost in the mist of ages and old when the world was young.

The fortress-crowned heights contract until they form the walls of a deep ravine, and a vaulted gateway wreathed with moss-grown inscriptions, and encrusted with crumbling sculpture, marks the entrance to the ruined city. A stately elephant, provided by his Highness the Maharajah for the steep ascent to the Palace of Ambar, awaits our arrival; the turbaned mahout feeding his charge with lengths of sugar-cane, and then swarming up the trunk to a seat on the huge head. The elephant kneels, and we mount by a flight of steps to the lofty howdah protected by a gilt railing. The swaying motion soon



ceases to be unpleasant, and though our peace of mind is at first disturbed by speculations upon the elephant's feelings when his head is prodded by a sharp goad, we are soon convinced that impenetrable thickness of skull opposes a surface of cast-iron to the weapon in the rider's hand. The road skirts the margin of a blue lake alive with man-eating alligators, which rear their shark-like heads from the water or bask in the sun on the rocky shore. Brown figures are bathing in the shadowy creeks, apparently undisturbed by the presence of the gruesome monsters, or secure in the questionable native belief that the voracious "mugger," however numerous, will only attack solitary individuals, and invariably flee from mankind as a noun of multitude.

A curve in the winding valley discloses the magnificent palace on a precipitous hill which rises above the lake. The vast pile crowns the summit of the mountain with a diadem of towers and cupolas, and dominates the ruined temples, shrines, and streets, scattered through the numerous gorges of the riven crags. The four graceful kiosks of the Royal Zenana rise immediately above the mouldering city, protected by the castellated fortress on the crest of the heights, where a tall white minaret pricks the hot blue sky above the long line of loop-holed battlements and frowning watch-towers. The saintly Bishop Heber, whose apostolic labours embraced an extensive range of Indian travel, expressed an opinion that the gorgeous Palace of Ambar, throned on the mountain and mirrored in the lake, formed a scene of transcendent beauty unrivalled in the whole peninsula. Crossing a stone bridge over the narrowing water, the elephant slowly mounts the steep acclivity, and through three majestic gateways of carved stone we reach a noble quadrangle paved with red and white tiles. The *Dawan-i-Khas*, or Audience Chamber, a beautiful pavilion of snowy marble, flanks "the abode of the men," an edifice rich in barbaric colour and elaborate sculpture, and entered by the finest door in the world.

The Hall of Victory glows with brilliant arabesques of birds and flowers, sacred scrolls, and geometrical figures inlaid with coloured stones on panels of alabaster; and the marble bath-rooms, adorned with curious mythological paintings, manifest the acme of Oriental luxury in beauty of architecture and ingenuity of construction. The richly-

decorated corridors of the zenana converge round a magnificent central hall known as "The Alcove of Light." Glittering sheets of opalescent mica line the walls, and delicately-enamelled garlands of white and yellow jasmine encircle the oval mirrors which reflect the many-coloured spangle-work of the over-arching cupola. The aerial loveliness of this octagonal chamber suggests an evanescent creation of fragile frost-work, or a fabric woven by fairy hands from limpid moonlight and pearly mist. The Temple of Devi, which forms an integral part of the palatial pile, serves as a grim reminder of the barbaric cruelties which existed side by side with the culture and refinement of ancient India. In this famous sanctuary the daily morning and evening sacrifices are still offered at the shrine of an insatiable goddess, whose thirst for blood, though now perforce appeased by the slaughter of an animal, formerly demanded a holocaust of human victims. The annual supply was provided by the Maharajahs of olden time from captives taken in battle, or from the numerous subjects who either in court or camp incurred the royal displeasure.

Ruined Ambar and prosperous Jeypore both demonstrate the complex religious associations of the reigning house. The bird's-eye view from the battlements commands the entire extent of the mouldering and time-worn city, which lies in the hollow of the hills, where the spiral shrines and crumbling temples of Hindu worship alternate with the domes and minarets of deserted mosques, and the marble tombs of Moslem saints. Weeds grow thickly in crevice and cranny, blue spears of aloe push through broken pavements, and feathery grasses wave above overthrown pillars. Birds build their nests in cavernous cupola or sculptured niche, and the ancient city which enshrines a world of memories is only inhabited by Hindu fakirs and fanatical dervishes, who retain their faith in the occult virtue which the traditions of Brahmin and Mohammedan alike attribute to the forgotten sepulchres and neglected sanctuaries of royal Ambar.

The Glen of the Kings' Tombs, a continuation of the long ravine which pierces the shadowy mountains, and a royal burial-place from time immemorial, wears the same aspect of desolation and decay which characterises the ruined city. An unearthly hush broods over the scene, and the solemn silence remains unbroken even by the muttered "Mantra" of a grimy



fakir or the nasal chant of a turbaned sheik.

The ancient Maharajahs sleep undisturbed in the shadow of the everlasting hills, as though considered past praying for, or superior to the need of priestly intercession. In the tranquil beauty of the Indian evening we look for the last time on the towering palace silhouetted against the golden sky, which turns the blue lake into a sheet of flame. Birds fly home to roost, and the musical trill of the bulbul echoes from a banyan-tree in the cypress-shaded garden of the Royal Zenana. The ceaseless use of the goad makes no apparent impression on the brain or the pace of the elephant, until the sight of the waiting carriage excites his sluggish mind, and he pursues the uneven tenor of his way with a joyous trumpeting. In the gathering darkness we jolt along the deserted road, past the invisible "milestones" of the vanished Moguls, towards the distant row of glittering gaslights which shed the illumination of the nineteenth century over the historic capital of old-world Rajputana.

## DR. MEREDITH'S ASSISTANT.

By MARGARET MOULE.

Author of "The Thirteenth Brigade," "Catherine Maidment's Burden," "Benefit of Clergy," "The Vicar's Aunt," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER V.

It was half-past ten on Sunday morning: a lovely, brilliant April morning. The four cracked old bells of Mary Combe church were chiming, and producing thereby a sound which was even more discordantly quavering than their week-day efforts in connection with the clock. But Mary Combe was used to the sound and respected it, with a respect that the newest bell-metal of the newest bell-founders could never have gained. There were lengthy traditions afloat in the place anent the age and dignity of the church bells, and a proposal made by Mr. Howard to renew them had met with unconcealed disfavour.

The people of Mary Combe were obeying the voice they respected and duly preparing themselves to go to church. For though, as has been said, a calm indifference to sermons was one of the characteristics of Mary Combe, another was the somewhat inconsistent conviction which dwelt in the minds of a large section of that community, that it was a duty to go and "sit under" them with weekly deference. A few individuals, who had

a leaning towards slow progression, and much conversation on the way, were already wending their way in groups of twos and threes, which now and then, in the pursuit of a common interest, amalgamated with each other. In the midst of them, threading his way through them with a quick tread that was in odd contrast to their more contemplative gait, walked Dr. Meredith. That he was not going to church, his dress, which was his everyday suit of brown, testified to the eyes which scanned him as he passed. In Mary Combe as in wider spheres, a black coat and a high hat were, if your rank in life permitted you to purchase these articles, absolutely necessary to appear at church in. Even Mr. Sharpe, the somewhat struggling owner of Mary Combe's one shop, managed to produce these credentials. It was also well known and understood that Dr. Meredith was very nearly as busy on Sundays as on other days; therefore he was scarcely ever expected by his fellow parishioners to join them.

Accordingly the speculation which his appearance originated this morning was not on whether he was or was not coming to church. It dealt with a different matter: whether he was or was not on his way to "Johnson's."

"He's there, I know for certain sure," affirmed Mrs. Green enigmatically, as Dr. Meredith passed her. Dressed in her irreproachable "Sunday's best"—a gown of wiry black stuff and a bordered shawl—she was accompanying and conversing with a few select friends. "The young gentleman he took the rooms—them two front downstairs ones—last night. And what more likely now than that he's steppin' up to see him, and how he likes it, for himself?"

This confused assortment of pronouns was accepted with a murmur of comprehending assent. And all the little group concentrated their attention on Dr. Meredith, who had distanced them by some yards now, and was proceeding rapidly along the street in front of them. In this their example was faithfully followed on either hand, and as the road rose slightly in the direction of the church, Dr. Meredith was in very literal truth the "cynosure of neighbouring eyes" when he stopped, most satisfactorily in view, and knocked sharply and rapidly with his stick on the door of a house about half-way up the rise.

The house was a little low, substantial

cottage, with three windows on the ground floor. One of these windows had been enlarged a little, and the fact that it was to-day veiled by a substantial shutter, proclaimed that its position in the world was that of a shop-front. The other windows were both smothered in stiffly-starched white lace curtains, between which a few leaves of geraniums were visible.

There were two doors, one on each side of the shuttered window. In somewhat weatherworn lettering, on a strip of black board, over that on the left of the window, was this inscription: "F. Johnson, Baker and Corndealer." It was at the other, the private door of the establishment, that Dr. Meredith had knocked.

For a moment or two his knock was unanswered. He stood tapping one foot on the ground with an impatient movement, while the gratified church-goers came a few slow paces nearer to him. Then his patience seemed to give out, and he knocked again sharply. This time the knock was answered at once.

"Very sorry, sir, I'm sure," said a breathless, good-natured looking woman. "The baby was crying, sir, I didn't hear; and Johnson, he always does lie a bit late, Sundays."

"Is—"

Dr. Meredith paused, and a little flush mounted into his face.

"Is—my assistant in?" he said abruptly.

"Yes, sir; I'm wishful to do my best for the gentleman, sir. I hope he'll find himself satisfied, sir."

Without waiting for an answer, Mrs. Johnson then entered upon a hasty and somewhat confused explanation of the reasons why she had not been able to take away "the young gentleman's breakfast things." The reasons consisted of the claims which the aforesaid baby was still mentioning in loud cries from the back; and with Dr. Meredith's quickly-spoken, "I'm sure it is all right, Mrs. Johnson. This door, I suppose?" she retreated rapidly to still the same.

Dr. Meredith knocked at a door on the right of the stone-flagged passage, and apparently received an answer, for he turned the handle and entered.

"Good morning!" he said shortly, and with the manner of a man who grudges even the civilities which his good breeding demands.

It was a small, square room, producing at first an effect of being furnished wholly with starched curtains and a brilliantly

crimson carpet, partly hidden by yellow oil-cloth strips. A horsehair sofa and "suite" of chairs draped in antimacassars asserted their presence later; and then a table with a green cloth, and a breakfast tray across one end, and a very stiff, uncomfortable arm-chair by the window, were seen to be the further details the room possessed.

In the very stiff, uncomfortable arm-chair was Dr. Meredith's assistant. The gray-clad figure was disposed at the most comfortable angle the chair allowed, and its possessor appeared to be absorbed in the enjoyment of a yellow-backed novel.

At the sound of the opening door, Althea Godfrey had looked up; at the sound of Dr. Meredith's "good morning," she had looked back at it and turned over a page; at the sound of his footsteps crossing the room, she laid it down slowly and looked at him.

"Good morning!" she responded; and then she promptly took up the book again.

It is a decidedly discomfiting experience to call upon a person who neither asks you to sit down, nor shows any immediate intention of holding any conversation with you. Dr. Meredith felt his position a little embarrassing; the more so, as he could not for the moment make up his mind what to do. He had come to a standstill on one of the yellow oilcloth strips near the window, and there he remained, holding his hat in his hand, and looking uncomfortable and decidedly at a loss.

His assistant turned over another page of the novel with a crackling deliberation. The sun streamed through the starched curtains hotly, falling short of the arm-chair, but falling full on Dr. Meredith. His much exercised mind hailed the sudden instinct to move out of the glare as an inspiration. He turned, and looked feebly about him for a chair. He found one, seated himself, and put his hat down all in silence; and in silence he gazed grimly at the picture on the cover of the yellow novel—a representation of a man and woman feeling some resentment towards each other. At least, the expression depicted on their countenances led to that conclusion.

Five minutes went by thus. Dr. Meredith had made up his own mind, that is to say as far as his first step in the interview was concerned. For some instants no page of the novel had been turned.

"You have come to your senses, I suppose, Jim?"

"You have come to your senses, of course, Althea?"

The two questions were fired off—for the way in which they were asked admits of no better description—absolutely simultaneously. But no trace of a smile at the coincidence appeared on either of the two faces steadily staring at each other. Each was waiting for the other's answer. None was forthcoming. Althea Godfrey closed her lips firmly. Dr. Meredith closed his slowly, and there was a pause, during which Dr. Meredith made a fidgety movement of impatience in his chair, and his assistant settled herself more comfortably in hers. She had laid the book on her knee, and she threw back her head now, and scanned the ceiling with an expression of coldly calm expectancy which would have chilled the battle ardour of a Bonaparte. Dr. Meredith felt first many sizes too large for the room; and then furiously angry with himself for feeling so. He dragged his chair a little further away, and with a gesture that meant many things: "I am absolutely determined, Althea!" he said firmly.

"Indeed!" was the answer, given without one movement of the handsome head from its position.

"I have been looking out trains," he added in a louder and slightly less firm tone.

"Indeed!"

"You will give up this lunatic plan, and be ready to leave here with me in time for the six-forty to town."

"It is very evident that you have not come to your senses, Jim."

Althea Godfrey moved her head and altered her position deliberately. As she spoke she sat very upright, her hands one on each arm of her chair.

"If you think," she said, "that the hours that have elapsed since I saw you have changed my mind, Jim, you're altogether mistaken. Here I am, and here I stay. I think I speak clearly!" she added, with a sarcastic inflexion in her voice.

"Quite!" he answered grimly, and then he paused and seemed for a moment to be somewhat dubiously casting about for words to go on with. "I shall be compelled," he went on at length, in a voice that seemed to try and supply the place of confidence by extra volume, "to take stronger measures. I am sorry to say this, Althea."

"What are they?" she said. "Do you contemplate taking me by my hair and personally dragging me out of Mary Combe? Do you think of urging on the populace to cast me forth as an impostor? Or do you think of summoning the arm of the

law to remove me forcibly? All of these courses are open to you, Jim. Let me recommend a simultaneous trial of the three. It would make an excellent advertisement for you, you know, besides disposing of me."

Dr. Meredith gasped and then choked in undignified and helpless wrath. His feelings were so far beyond the reach of any words that he could only, for some moments, sit staring at the upright figure opposite to him with a blankly vacant face which was growing a trifle pale with despair. At last he said, in a tone which held a curious mixture of aggressiveness and hopelessness:

"I do not intend, Althea, to leave this room until I have shown you the folly, the indescribable madness of this frame of mind on your part."

Althea Godfrey leaned back in her chair and crossed her feet carelessly. A tiny smile twitched the corners of her mouth, and she said coolly:

"I shall be delighted to have you stay, Jim, as long as you wish. Pray do so. But if you imagine that your presence will have the smallest effect on my intention, you were never more mistaken in your life. You will not mind," with a mischievous light in her eyes, "the fact that I have an engagement this morning, and must therefore leave you alone here. I am to be fetched to Orchard Court at twelve."

Althea spoke with a quiet calmness that was not without a suspicion of triumph. The words had a curious effect on her listener. All at once the arguing, angry, determined Dr. Meredith seemed to disappear, and quite another personality took its place. They had suggested to him the fact that she had, on the night before, seen one of his patients, and for the moment everything else was swept away in keen professional cares and interests. His face was as eager as his voice as he moved his chair with a jerk a little nearer to her, and said:

"You saw the Mainwaring child, then?"

"Yes."

"Much amiss?"

"The injuries are serious about the head and shoulders."

"It'll go on all right, I suppose? You don't mean that it's so serious as that?"

"Oh, no. It'll pull through with care, all right. But it will be frightfully disfigured, poor mite, I'm afraid."

"Disfigured!" Dr. Meredith's tone expressed compassionate concern. "That

poor, silly little Mrs. Mainwaring! what will she do? The child's beauty has been the chief delight of her heart. Conscious, is it?"

"No."

"Much better not."

During this short colloquy Dr. Meredith's changed personality seemed to have affected his assistant also, for she was as altered as he was. All her antagonistic attitude was in the background. She was interested, eager, and even cordial in voice and manner. She seemed to rely on his interest, and he to confide in her sympathy, as surely as if no difficulty or dissensions had ever been known between them. The two were for the moment one, resting securely on a common ground.

But the common ground was only a little tiny island in the sea of their contention. They stepped away from it, back into the deep water again with a unanimity that was almost ludicrous. Althea Godfrey resumed her coolly defiant resistance again instantly; Dr. Meredith became once again his irate, determined self.

She took up the yellow book as if it had been a weapon; he straightened himself as if to prepare for a charge. There was a little silence. Then she said airily:

"It must be getting on for twelve, now, I should think!"

"Do I understand then, Althea, that you are set upon following your own self-willed, senseless course?"

The question came sharply on her remark, but her answer followed more sharply yet.

"Without the adjectives, Jim, you do! I intend to stay here and help you; with your goodwill or without it."

"If I refuse to accept your help?"

"You can't! The whole place has heard of me as your assistant. Your own household have seen me in that capacity. You can't refuse work to me without any reasons after that, and you equally cannot give your reasons!"

There was in her voice a half-mocking inflexion of triumph, which, together with the dreadful conviction that her words were

true, exasperated Dr. Meredith's insecure self-control to a point beyond his power of restraint.

"I think," he said in a voice tremulous with the rage which he could no longer keep out of it, "I think, Althea, that if your convictions of duty and propriety are so diametrically opposed to mine, we are scarcely likely to make each other's lives very happy."

"At this moment, we shouldn't make a placid household, certainly!" she retorted, looking up as she spoke with the quietest nonchalance into his working, angry face. "It's not I!" she added demurely.

Fired to greater passion by the sight of her unassailable coolness, Dr. Meredith struck the top bar of the nearest chair with his clenched fist.

"It will be your doing if we part over this!" he cried almost fiercely.

"I beg your pardon, Jim; it will be yours, distinctly! I never alluded to the subject, whatever I may have thought of the prospect before me since I have had the pleasure of knowing you better," she added, with a quick flash of her spirited grey eye, which were full upon him. "Since you have so thoughtfully introduced it," she went on, "I may as well tell you at once that my views are precisely the same as yours."

"I am thankful to hear it," he said, looking hurriedly about him for his hat. This had somehow rolled behind a chair and established itself in a corner very difficult to get at.

His assistant's eyes twinkled audaciously, while Dr. Meredith awkwardly and angrily knelt down and proceeded to try and extricate it.

"Understand, Jim," she said, as he rose, crimson with wrath and stooping, his dusty hat in his hand, "the fact of our unsuitability to each other is the only one under heaven on which our views possibly can agree."

Without a word, he unceremoniously put on his dusty property just as it was, left the room, and left the house.

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The Terms to Subscribers having their Copies sent direct from the Office: Weekly Numbers, 10s. 10d. the Year, including postage; and Monthly Parts, 12s. 6d.

Post Office Orders should be made payable to ALBERT SEYMOUR, 12, St. Bride Street, Ludgate Circus, E.C.

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For particulars respecting Advertisement Spaces, address THE ADVERTISING MANAGER of "All the Year Round," No. 168, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

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## HOME NOTES

AND

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**DUTCH STEW.**—Have about two pounds of shin of beef and cut into three-inch squares, and set it on to stew with a pint and a half of cold water or stock, and a large slice of onion. When these begin to boil, add a teaspoonful of salt, less or more according to taste; also some long peppers, and simmer gently for one and a half hours. Prepare some young white-hearted cabbage, which has been parboiled; squeeze very dry in a colander, and lay with the beef. Let the stew cook for another hour, and serve. Those who like the spiced stews should add some mixed spices and a few bits of lean bacon to the above recipe.

**SNOWDON TART.**—Mix four ounces of cornflour with four ounces of flour, a teaspoonful of baking-powder, and a dessert-spoonful of castor sugar. With the tips of the fingers rub into this three ounces of butter, and make into a dough with the yolk of an egg and a gill of milk. Roll out the paste and lay it on a greased plate, turning up the edge an inch high all the way round, and ornamenting it to taste. Prick the bottom well, and then bake in a quick oven. Nearly fill with stewed fruit, and before serving ornament the top with the white of an egg beaten to a stiff froth. This makes a pretty dish and is a change from ordinary fruit tart.

**CAROLINA PUDDING.**—Wash carefully three tablespoonfuls of rice, and put it on to boil with a quart of milk; sweeten to taste, and flavour it either with a bay-leaf or a stick of cinnamon. Let the rice cook gently beside the fire until the milk is all absorbed, then turn it out into a basin, removing the lemon rind or bay-leaves. Stir into it two well-beaten eggs and a dozen bleached and chopped almonds. Butter a mould and pour in the mixture, baking it in a quick oven for half an hour. Before removing it from the oven insert a knife, and if it comes out clean the pudding is cooked. Serve either plain or with wine sauce or cream.

**CHEESE SALAD.**—Salads are always popular, and any novelty in serving them is appreciated. Arrange the salad in a bowl, using lettuce, watercress, etc., and then make a good mayonnaise sauce. Take some soft new cheese and pound it in a mortar, moistening it by degrees with the mayonnaise. When thoroughly amalgamated, pour over the salad, garnish with tomatoes or radishes, and serve.

It is told of Daniel Drew, a well-known New York merchant, that, remaining one evening late in the office, and having occasion to use the safe, he permitted the cashier to go home, remarking that he would close the safe, and fix the combination on the word "door." But when the cashier undertook to open the safe in the morning, he found the lock refused to yield to the magic "door." He tried and tried again, but without success. Finally, happening to remember that Daniel's early education had been neglected, he attributed his ill-luck to poor orthography. He therefore tried the lock upon "dore"—still no success—and then upon "doar," with no better fortune. Finally, becoming disgusted, he proceeded to the St. Nicholas, routed "Dan'l" out of a beautiful morning nap, and, as he stuck his nightcap out of the door, this colloquy ensued: "Mr. Drew, I can't open the safe on 'door.' You must have concluded to change the word." "Change the word! Nothin' o' the kind. I shut it on 'door.'" "Are you sure, sir?" "Sure, sir? Of course I'm sure." "Well, perhaps, Mr. Drew, I don't spell the word right. How did you spell it?" "Spell it? Any fool can spell 'door'—d-o-a-r-e, doars, of course, sir. If you can't spell 'door,' sir, you're no cashier for me. Pack up your duds and go out of the 'door.'" And, shutting the door in the cashier's face, Daniel in a passion returned to his bed, and the clerk to the safe. Armed with the open sesame of "doars," however, the safe flew open without further trouble; and, when Daniel arrived, mollified by a good breakfast, he advised his cashier that he might keep his place, provided he would improve his time and "go tu spellin'-skool in the evenin'."

A CORRESPONDENT asks whether ants talk, and states that one day he saw a drove of small black ants moving apparently to new quarters, each carrying some of the household goods. Every time they met in the way they put their heads together as though they were chatting. To investigate the matter he killed one, and the eye-witnesses of the murder hastened away and laid their heads together with every ant they met. Then they immediately turned back and fled on another course, as if it had been said: "For the King's sake and for your safety, do not go there, for I have left a monster just behind, that is able to destroy us all at one blow." How, asks the writer, was the news communicated if not by speech?

## ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

ROBBERIES are inconveniences incidental to every community, and the orthodox procedure of "infractio into houses with intent to steal" is not unknown in Mauritius. It is essential, before retiring to rest, to pass round and see that every bolt is properly in its place, and occasionally on these expeditions a boy may be found lurking under a table or concealed between the doors, upon mischief bent, and such proceedings are heard of elsewhere. But it is not so certain that to be robbed under your very nose is a common experience all over the world. For purposes of ventilation the upper part of windows is left slightly open, and through this, when the occupant of the chamber is plunged in slumber, the end of a bamboo wand is thrust, having attached thereto a small bag filled with a substance whose exhalation is powerfully narcotic. When the sleeper is thus put beyond all chances of interference, the operator, who, stripped to the skin, has taken the precaution to oil his person thoroughly, in case of possible attempt at capture, slips through the open window, and has time leisurely to help himself to whatever he wants. The influence of the opiate wearing off, the happy dreamer wakes to find with morning light that his clothes and property have all vanished. It may be asked at such times: "Where are the servants?" and echo answers, "Where?"

A PROMINENT American lawyer tells of a compromise he once made on behalf of a certain railway company with an Erie County farmer whose wife had been killed at a railroad crossing. A few months after the terrible bereavement, the husband, who had sued the company for five thousand dollars' damages, came into the office and accepted a compromise of five hundred dollars. As he stuffed the wad of bills into his pocket, he turned to the lawyer and cheerily remarked: "Vell, dot's not so bad after all. I've got fife hundret tollar and a good teal better wife as I had afore."

LITTLE PUDDINGS.—Take half a pint of soft bread-crumbs, and soak for half an hour in half a pint of warm milk, add half a tablespoonful of soft butter, a tablespoonful of cream, ditto sugar, a pinch of salt, a few currants, and a well-beaten egg. Flavoured the pudding with nutmeg or cinnamon, and bake in small cups. Whilst baking, stir once or twice to prevent all the currants from settling at the bottom of the cups.

AMONG the strangest peculiarities of Tangiers, Morocco, and one that at once forces itself on the newcomer, is the total absence of any kind of wheeled vehicle. In the entire city—which is an example of all the others in the empire—there is not even a donkey-cart, for the streets are much too narrow to admit of their use, and transportation of passengers and merchandise is effected upon the backs of donkeys, horses, mules, and camels, according to the weight and distance. There are but few streets into which a loaded camel could enter, and not more than three in which he could pass another loaded camel or horse. Some of the smaller streets are so narrow that even the panniers of a donkey would scrape upon either side, so that in the city itself the transportation devolves upon donkeys for the side streets, and upon horses and mules for the main thoroughfares.

THIS anecdote is told of that enormously wealthy man, the late Commodore Vanderbilt. At Saratoga, on one occasion, when sitting on the piazza of an hotel, a somewhat over-dressed lady approached and claimed his acquaintance. The Commodore rose and talked affably with her, while his wife and daughter sniffed the air with scorn. "Father," said the young lady, as the Commodore resumed his seat, "didn't you remember that vulgar Mrs. B—— as the woman who used to sell poultry to us at home?" "Certainly," responded the old gentleman promptly; "and I remember your mother when she used to sell root-beer at three cents a glass over in Jersey, when I went up there from Staten Island peddling oysters out of my boat." As this homely reply was heard by a group surrounding the family, there was no further attempt at aristocratic airs on the part of the ladies during that season.

FRIED CHICKEN is a pleasant change from the usual "roast fowl." Prepare the bird as for roasting, cut it into joints, and remove the breastbone. Wipe each piece with a damp flannel, dredge it well with highly-seasoned flour, and fry in hot lard till brown and tender. Be careful the fat is not too hot, so that it will burn the fowl before it is cooked. Have a boiled cauliflower ready, place it on a dish, and pour a good brown gravy over. Arrange the fried chicken round, and over all scatter a little grated cheese. This is a very dainty dish, and one that may be made from the foreign fowls that we buy so cheaply in our large towns.

## HOME NOTES.

KEMBLE in private life was courteous and hospitable, and his conversation was enriched by a wide range of classical and general knowledge; his grave, Cervantic humour is shown pleasantly in the following story. Kemble and a friend, having dined together, went to Drury Lane, the manager wishing to give his ultimate instructions for the night. As they entered the hall of the theatre, some grenadiers standing by the fireplace, seeing the manager, respectfully took off their hats; on which Kemble instantly borrowed a guinea of his friend, and with a wink gravely advanced and addressed the soldiers. "Soldiers," he said, in his grand declamatory manner, "when Cato led his army across the burning deserts of Libya, he found himself quite parched up with the intense drought—in plainer words, he was very dry. One of the soldiers, hearing this, stepped unperceived out of the ranks, and presently brought him some water in a steel cap. What do you think Cato said to the soldier? I'll tell you. 'Comrade,' said he, 'drink first yourself.' Now, I daresay Cato never in his life led braver men than I at present see before me; therefore, to follow so great an example, you drink that for me." So saying, he put the guinea into the hands of the sergeant, the soldiers shouting, "God bless your honour!" as Kemble and his friend retired to the dressing-room.

**SCALLOPED TOMATOES.**—This is a good way of cooking the popular vegetable, especially the foreign kind, which is becoming plentiful and cheap now. First scald the fruit so as to peel it easily, and cut it small. Line a pie-dish with bread-crumbs, then a layer of tomato, scatter pepper and salt over and some pieces of butter. Then put another layer of bread-crumbs and tomatoes, and so on till the dish is full. Scatter a little chopped parsley over the top, then a thick layer of bread-crumbs, strew bits of butter over, and bake.

"I AM here, gentlemen," explained the pickpocket to his fellow prisoners, "as the result of a moment of abstraction." "And I," said the incendiary, "because of an unfortunate habit of making light of things." "And I," chimed in the forger, "on account of a simple desire to make a name for myself." "And I," added the burglar, "through nothing but taking advantage of an opening which offered in a large mercantile establishment in town." But here the warden separated them.

EDISON, the great electrician, displayed an inventive imagination even in his earliest years, if we are to believe the story told of him by a writer in *St. Nicholas*. Astonished at the results of a goose sitting on a nest of eggs, the inventor thought to increase the brood by a device of his own. One day the boy was missed from his usual haunts. Messengers were sent in search of him, and found him curled up in a nest he had made in the barn. It was filled with goose and hen eggs, upon which he was sitting trying to hatch them! Edison was more successful in another youthful experiment which he made. His wanderings brought him, at seventeen years of age, to the Cincinnati Office of the Western Union Telegraph Company, where his devotion to electricity confirmed the nickname "Luny," which clung to him even until his fame was established. "We have the craziest chap in our office," said the telegraph manager to a Cincinnati editor; "he tries all sorts of queer things. I wouldn't be surprised if he should be great some day. Let me tell you his last prank. We had been annoyed for some time by cockroaches. They infested the sink. They don't now. 'Luny' settled them! He just ran two parallel wires round the sink, and charged one with negative and the other with positive electricity; bread crumbs were then scattered, and when Mr. Cockroach appeared and put his little feet on the wires, ashes were all that were left to tell the tale."

**AUSTRALIAN BEEF AND DERBY SAUCE** make a very good dish on a warm spring day, when any hot meats are objected to. Cut some pressed beef from a small tin into half-inch slices and serve with this sauce. Chop up finely a tablespoonful of parsley, a teaspoonful of eschalot, and two powdered anchovies. Mix these well with pepper and salt, and a little mustard. Whip up the yolk of an egg slightly, add two tablespoonfuls of oil to it by degrees. Beat all the ingredients well together until the sauce is thick and smooth.

ONCE when playing cards with the Lord Mayor, who was an enormously rich brewer, Beau Brummel, as he rose and coolly pocketed the money, said, "Thank you, sir; for the future I shall never drink any porter but yours." "I wish, sir," replied the brewer, "that every other rogue in London would tell me the same." It is needless to say that the Beau never tried to be funny at this gentleman's expense again.



## ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

"OUR party," we read in "Across France in a Caravan," "was to consist originally of Peggie, the collie James, and myself. Peggie was to do the cooking; James—well, James was to have certain undefined duties, which, now I come to think over it after it is all finished, never were exactly defined; for the most part he enacted the rôle of distinguished passenger. But of course it would have been out of the question to have left him behind. One might as well have thought of leaving me. As for myself, I was to look after the horses when we had got them. I didn't know very much about horses, to tell the truth, at that time, except how to actually drive them, and perhaps take a stone out if it got into a shoe on the road; and when I had studied various books on horses and their ailments—the chief part of said books being devoted to the ailments—and had heard all that my more horsey friends had to tell me about them, I must own that I began to feel a little tremulous, and to revolve in my mind whether it wouldn't perhaps be better to get a traction-engine instead as being less delicate. And I was to make myself generally useful to Peggy—and, I suppose, to James."

SOME years ago in Paris, some people were discussing the discoveries of Columbus in the presence of the late Lord Lytton, the British Ambassador. Colomb, shall I explain, is the French for Columbus, and la colombe is the French for "the dove." "It is very singular," some one observed, "that la colombe discovered the old world, and le Colomb discovered the new."

FRESHLEIGH: "I hear that young Rashleigh has gone and married some obscure person without any family at all, don'tcher know." Wiseleigh: "What, a més-alliance?" Freshleigh: "No, that's not the name; a Miss Thompson or Tomkins, or something like that, I think."

SOME absurd stories have been told of judges thinking aloud. The following story is told by one of the Registrars of the Court of Chancery of a great Chancellor: A barrister, whom he had not previously heard, was retained to argue before him. The counsel was a man of ability, but began in a very confused, floundering manner. Lord Chancellor: "What a fool the man is!" After a while he got more cool and collected. Lord Chancellor: "Ah! not such a fool as I thought." Finally, he quite recovered himself, and proceeded admirably. Lord Chancellor: "Egad! It is I that was the fool."

THE turbaned Hindoo placidly immoveable amid side-splitting jokes, or the oblique-eyed Celestial whose smile never strays beyond "childlike and bland" proportions, have, in spite of an apparent lack of boisterous mirth, a very real fund of humour of no mean quality. There is a very good story told in a Persian jest-book that is worth repeating. One of his neighbours went to a great dignitary and asked the loan of a rope. The great man went into his house, and after a little time had elapsed he returned to the would-be borrower and told him that the rope was in use in tying up the flour. "What do you mean?" said the neighbour. "How can a rope be used to bind up flour?" "A rope may be put to any use if I do not wish to lend it," retorted the other, which, whatever may be the Eastern ideas about such matters, according to Western lights was a very direct snub.

THE mechanism of the leg and foot of a chicken or other bird that roosts on a limb is a marvel of design. It often seems strange that a bird will sit on a roost and sleep all night without falling off, but the explanation is perfectly simple. The tendon of the leg of a bird that roosts is so arranged that when the leg is bent at the knee the claws are bound to contract, and thus hold with a sort of death-grip the limb round which they are placed. Put a chicken's feet on your wrist, and then make the bird sit down, and you will have a practical illustration on your skin that you will remember for some time. By this singular arrangement, seen only in such birds as roost, they will rest comfortably and never think of holding on, for it is impossible for them to let go till they stand up.

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